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TO: ALL WEST GULF DIVISION ARRL MEMBERS.

Greetings. On this, and following pages I bring to your attention a number of items concerning amateur radio. Foremost in mind is the contemplated restructuring of our licensing system by the Federal Communications Commission.

On May 10, as a member of the ARRL board of directors I was privileged to attend a meeting in Washington, DC, wherein Mr. A. Prose Walker, Chief of FCC Amateur and Citizens Licensing Division, and his staff explained in considerable detail their current thinking on their proposal to rather drastically change our licensing (operating privilege) structure. As I departed the meeting, the thought uppermost in my mind was a feeling these gentlemen are earnestly striving to do something constructive for amateur radio, and are proceeding along the path led by their perspective of the situation. No doubt, in accordance with standing administrative procedure ARRL, in common with all other interested parties will be granted an opportunity to comment at the proper time, should the Commission continue with its plan to formulate a new licensing system for amateurs.

Several schemes are under consideration. The one they currently favor can be summarized as follows: There would be two separate courses to pursue upward to the Extra Class license.

(1) One would be essentially the same as now, i.e., Novice (Communicator Class), Technician, General, and Advanced, with privileges in the HF spectrum only (3 - 29 Mhz) unless they also take VHF elements.

(2) The other course would have a similar advancement scheme but would relate to and grant privileges only in the VHF/UHF spectrum.

Presumably Extra Class would have all privileges.

It is contemplated the beginning VHF/UHF license would consist of a code free, theory/regs only examination, with limited privileges in a segment of an unspecified VHF/UHF band.

The proposed changes appear to have been originated in order to satisfy some 43 petitions on hand in the FCC licensing division upon which processing action is pending.

Please bear in mind no formal notice of proposed rule making has been published. Should such action be forthcoming QST will carry the details.

I would consider it inappropriate at the present time to submit comments on this subject direct to the Commission. However, the possibility of action is such that I do consider it an appropriate subject for discussion within ARRL groups (not necessarily on the air, where misconceptions so often occur). In event formal notice of rule making is forthcoming it can be expected I shall ask for your comments.

Now for a few comments by ye olde Director on the above subject:

1. DO WE NEED IT? Assuming the proposal is generated by the 43 petitions on file in FCC, scrutiny of these reveals the great majority of them are asking one thing - Technician privileges in the Novice bands (the League is already on record in favor of this change). Others have little obvious merit, some are impractical to enforce (e.g., limiting power to 250/300 watts); these should be summarily denied.

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The few remaining perhaps deserve routine administrative processing.

2. WHAT ARE THE OBVIOUS HAZARDS TO THE RESTRUCTURING PROPOSAL?

For one thing, some might find themselves taking 8 examinations before reaching the Extra Class plateau! (At 10 bucks per whack, plus travel).

Throughout the discussions there were repeated references to the use of volunteer examiners. In the opinion of this writer, volunteer examiners can safely be used for the entering code test only. ALL theory/regs exams should be taken before a salaried employee of the government (FCC, PO, or other civil service) where the possible penalty of punitive action hangs over the examiners head should he vary from prescribed procedure. Most certainly there are hundreds of honest, conscientious volunteer examiners - but we well know one bad apple can spoil a barrel. In addition, the prestige given by taking and passing an examination before Commission or commission related personnel greatly enhances the value of the amateur license to the individual. Then too, a person who pays 10 dollars to take an examination is entitled to the full treatment, no short cuts.

Most frightening however, is the possibility that in view of current problems the Commission might withdraw authority for CB'ers to operate on 27 Mhz- telling them if they wish to continue operation to get an Amateur Communicator License via no code, volunteer examiner route. In event this withdrawal occurs we should welcome those CB'ers into amateur ranks who pass an examination before proper authority. But volunteer examiners to admit CB'ers into amateur ranks? NEVER! The hazards to our more than half century old respected endeavors are too great.

WHERE TO PUT THEM? 29Mhz? In less than a week we would have practically every one of the current CB'ers (licensed and unlicensed) shifting his xtals (or vfo) - no other change necessary, and there goes the ball game in our 10 meter band!

6 Meters? Because of TVI on Channel 2 we amateurs already have enough troubles there.

144 Mhz? Nope. 2 meters is our only exclusive amateur band on VHF, and it is already overloaded in many areas, with occupancy increasing daily, and added modes coming in fast.

220? Presumably a logical spot, provided they were segregated at one end of the band AND are required to take an exam before the Man. However, how to keep them out of our repeaters would be a most difficult problem.

450? We're already second class citizens on that band (third class if FCC permits the Medical Service to intrude. And, with the advent of very high power radio location devices proliferating along the coasts our occupancy there is threatened.

So, what to do with CB'ers? Why not leave them in their present location and enforce the law? The mobile monitoring teams are doing excellent work in that regard (albeit at some hazard to the personnel involved), and encourage those who are capable and adequately motivated to get an amateur license in the authorized manner, and join us for really enjoyable operating.

With regard to restructuring, there is no simple or all satisfying answer to the problem (if there is a problem). But it would appear one of the goals of restructuring would be to simplify, rather than complicate an already complex licensing structure. We now have six classes of license (not counting the special requirements for repeaters). Amateur radio achieved its greatest accomplishments with only 3 classes (A,B,C). Incidentally, this was the basic ARRL proposal in the famous (or infamous depending upon one's viewpoint) RM-499 (see pages 66,67,68,69 QST for November, 1963.

At some risk of oversimplification it would appear the following restructuring would accomplish the desired result, bearing in mind our demonstrated capability to police our bands:

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3. HERE WOULD BE MY RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. Establish four (4) classes of license.

(1) NOVICE/COMMUNICATOR. Current Novice privileges on HF, A3 privileges on a segment of 220. Simplified theory/regs/practices exam. No code requirement on examination except compliance with ITU regulations (which require only that a person demonstrate ability to communicate via International Morse Code, no code speed specified).

(2) GENERAL/TECHNICIAN. Same theory, etc., as now. 10 wpm code test. Same frequency and mode privileges for both. Currently licensed Technicians to appear for 10 wpm code test and code indorsement on license within one year of date of order.

(3) ADVANCED. 15 wpm code test when upgrading to Advanced. No code speed change for Advanced currently licensed. No change in theory/Regs exam.

(4) EXTRA. No change.

b. Increase the number of FCC examiners, examination points, and examining times - utilizing the services of Civil Service personnel for conducting tests, with grading to be done in FCC offices.

Another interesting thought tossed out at the Washington meeting was FCC belief that perhaps they need an Amateur Advisory Committee for the purpose of broadening the base of their perspective on amateur matters. At first glance this appeared to be an excellent idea. But, shouldn't this basically be the function of ARRL? And, was this a gentle way of reminding the 15 ARRL Directors present that perhaps ARRL isn't doing their job in this area? It was noted one task of such committee might be to screen petitions and make recommendations to the FCC regarding disposition of those petitions. It might be observed one ARRL director had the same thought recently when he made such a proposal to the board. The proposal was referred to committee (please see board minute 47, QST, page 84, September, 1973).

FLASH

Word has just been received that directors have chosen the April QST article "A Simple and Efficient Mixer for 2304 Mhz," by long-time VHF experts LEROY MAY, W5AJG, and BEN LOWE, WA5UVM, as winner of the coveted Cover Plaque Award for that month. Congratulations Leroy and Ben!

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COMING EVENTS

Tex VHF-FM Society Summer Convention. Fri, Sat, Sun, 2,3,4 August, at Dallas WEST Ramada Inn, in Irving, Tx. Featured speaker will be Mr. A. PROSE WALKER, W4BW, Chief of the Amateur and Citizens Licensing Division, FCC. Registration $3.00 ($4.00 at the door). For more info write Tx VHF-FM Society, P. O. Box 3823, Irving, Tx. 75061.

CORA (Central Oklahoma Radio Amateurs, Inc) HAM HOLIDAY. Will be held in the new SolarDome, Holiday Inn, I-40 at Sooner Road, Oklahoma City, Sat and Sun 3,4 August. For more info contact Ray Peters, WB5BTT.

Annual All 5th District QCWA Picnic - 9:00 AM Sat 29 June, Smith Memorial Bldg, Hwy 31, just south of Tyler Rose Garden. For details contact Frank Sewell, W5IZU, Sr., 1530 E. Idell, Tyler, Tx. 75706.

1974 ARRL NATIONAL CONVENTION - 19, 20, 21 July. Waldorf-Astoria hotel, New York City. For details write - ARRL Convention, 303 Tenafly Road, Englewood, N. J. 07631. (If you plan to attend, please let me know. Vice Director Gant, W5GM, and I will be there).

Texoma Hamarama - 26, 27 October. Lake Texoma Lodge, Kingston, Okla.

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SOUTHWEST RADIO COUNCIL

For some time it has been apparent we have a number of sticky, recurring operational, communication, administrative and coordination problems within the division which might be alleviated by the formation of an advisory/assistance group. I refer to such items as assisting in planning for Division ARRL conventions, maintaining closer liaison with our 68 affiliated clubs, expediting dissemination of information, avoiding conflicting hamfest and convention meeting dates, providing useful information regarding candidates for election to the offices of Director, Vice Director, SCM's, etc.

It is in recognition of my own inability to perform all these tasks efficiently that I was pleased to see incorporation of the newly formed SOUTHWEST RADIO COUNCIL, with headquarters in the Dallas- Fort Worth area.

Detailed information concerning the council will be published by them in the near future. Membership probably will be open to club representation. Currently the Council officers are:

President - L. F. HEITHECKER, W5EJ Vice President - TOM CHANCE, WA5VJX

Secretary - BYRON HARRISON, K5AIT Treasurer - WALT WIEDERHOLD, W5OGZ

Board Members

TED BENSINGER, W5PCX, JOHN RODEN, WA5UOC, F. MAX OLIVER, WA5PXQ.

COUNCIL ADDRESS: P. O. Box 47382, Dallas, Texas, 75247.

As a result of our extremely successful ARRL West Gulf Division convention last year the Council revived the rotating Division Convention Fund, endowed it with an initial amount of money ($372.50), and appointed a fund trustee committee consisting of:

RUTH CHANCE, WA5VJW, President, BETTY RODEN, WB5DMR, Sec'y,

EILENE SPIEGEL, WA5WDW, Treasurer.

Members

PEGGY BOWLING, WA5VHW, TED HEITHECKER, W5EJ, ROY ALBRIGHT, W5EYB (Ex-Officio member)

This committee is now seeking means to increase the amount of the fund, which will be advanced, if necessary, to the group sponsoring the next West Gulf Division ARRL Convention.

With reference to Division Conventions, I think we ought to have one next year. 1976 will be too preoccupied with celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the founding of our nation for us to consider a convention that year. Perhaps the SW Radio Council will take this subject under consideration and give us some recommendations.

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For our members with sight problems - QST is available on tape, from the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

The second ARRL film "THIS IS HAM RADIO" can be obtained for showings from Association-Sterling Films, 8615 Directors Row, Dallas, Tx., 75247

Traffic handlers - be sure to report traffic to your SCM in order to receive consideration for the new annual Certificate of Merit awarded to top tfc station in each section. K5TEY, W5TI, and WB5CUR were last year winners.

As we go to press there are two candidates for SCM, North Texas Section, the incumbent W5LR, and K5QKM. W5CJZ was declared ineligible after having been nominated because of a recent gap in licensing. (This should be a reminder we all must watch that license expiration date).

In Oklahoma, W5PML was re-elected in recent balloting in that section.

OFFICIAL BULLETIN BROADCASTS

Sometime ago the League found it necessary to discontinue mailing W1AW Bulletins to our affiliated clubs. As a result, some of us are not now getting info regarding amateur affairs in a timely manner, partly due to the difficulty of copying W1AW direct.

Listed below are some of the Official Bulletin Stations in this Division who broadcast these bulletins. Amateurs are urged to post this chart in the shack. Address inquiries concerning bulletin broadcasts to your SCM.

STATION	DAY(s)	TIME (GMT)	FREQUENCY	MODE
		OKLAHOMA		
WA5AOB (Okla City)	Mon, Wed, Fri	2300Z	146.94, 146.82	FM
WA5BFS (Tulsa)	Day rec'd	50 min past hour	146.94, 146.88	FM
			444.10	"
WA5BFSN (Kingfisher)	Sun	1300Z	3900	LSB
	Mon, Wed, Fri	2230Z	3850	LSB
	Tue, Thur, Sat c	2245Z	3900	LSB
W5BML (Lawton)	Mon, Wed, Fri	2330Z	146.94	FM
		NORTH TEXAS		
W5BVC (Kilgore)	Sun	1310Z	3970	LSB
W5IZU (Tyler)	Daily	1300Z	3835	LSB
W5SOQ (Dallas)	Daily	1200Z	146.94, 146.88	FM
W5BNG (Ft Worth)	Sun	1400Z	3930	LSB
		1800Z	3970	LSB
W5LGY (Commerce)	Thur	1330Z	3940	LSB
		SOUTH TEXAS		
WB5GZG (Houston)	Mon	0045Z	3750	CW
	Tue	0030Z	3750	CW
W5AIR (Houston)	Sun	1300Z	3945	LSB
	Sun	1500Z	7230	LSB
	Thur	0000Z	3835	LSB
W5ZPJ (Port Lavaca)	Sun	1230Z	3955	LSB
	Wed	0000Z	3955	LSB

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We'd like to recognize them all, but how is this for long-time service, loyalty and activity in League affairs - BILL GENTRY, W5GF, Amarillo, Texas, first licensed as 5BN (1923), later 5ATD, 5BTN PORTABLE (one of the few exclusively 'portable' calls ever issued) and W5GF since 1927.

BILL was SCM Oklahoma '29 - 33, SCM North Texas '52 - 54, Official Observer '54, A-1 Operators Club member, Advanced Class licensee, former NCS Army Amateur Radio (Oklahoma Net), and many other honors, including military service during WWII. Our congratulations to a real fine amateur and long-time friend.

Reminder to wives and girl friends - Beginning this year the RADIO AMATEURS HANDBOOK will be on sale about 1 November, just in time to be an excellent Christmas gift to a deserving aficionado. Also, late news from headquarters informs us the long hoped-for revised edition of the ANTENNA BOOK is coming off the press. Watch for it.

Welcome to our newest DX Club - the ALAMO DX AMIGOS, W5LPO president. RWK and TEX DX SOCIETY move over, competition is coming.

MARS

At the recent Texas State Army MARS meeting in San Antonio I was most gratified to see that all but 4 or 5 of the 70+ MARS members present were ARRL members. This same percentage held true at the big regional meeting in Missouri last year, and is a considerably higher percentage of League membership than we usually find in the affiliated clubs.

Incidentally, Mr. ROLAND BELA, A5LLS/W5LLS (Asst Dir, for MARS affairs) Regional MARS Director informs us there will be a Regional meeting next year - same place as last: Stevens College, Columbia, Missouri.

During the recent ARRL Executive Committee meeting ARRL Technical Dept chief DOUG DEMAW was authorized to purchase a good spectrum analyzer.

The acquisition of this piece of equipment for the ARRL Laboratory will enable the technical staff to give us more information on 'RECENT EQUIPMENT'in QST. Unfortunately, Doug advises delivery time is 17 wks!

One small item constantly worries me. Although ARRL represents the great majority of active amateurs some among us cannot keep abreast of developments in amateur radio because they are not League members and it is not practical to distribute QST on news stands (except electronic dealers). Please pass the word to non-member amateurs - I can furnish application blanks for membership.

And now, if I may be permitted to do so, I'd like to express a couple of bits of my favorite philosophy; the first from Gibbon:

> "All the evidence of history suggests that man is indeed a rational animal - but with a near infinite capacity for folly. His history seems largely a halting, but persistent effort to raise his reason above his animality. He draws blueprints for Utopia. But never quite gets it built. In the end he plugs away obstinately with the only building material really ever at hand: His own part-comic, part-tragic, part-cussed, but part glorious nature."

And the other: "Retirement isn't so bad; after you get used to the fact that your time is no longer your own."

73, and don't forget to check that generator before field day, or the hurricane, whichever comes first.

Roy Albright

ROY L. ALBRIGHT, W5EYB
Director.